

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

*The listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:*

**Listing of Claims:**

1.-25. **(Canceled).**

26. **(Currently Amended)** A catheter comprising:

a catheter shaft having a distal end and a proximal end, the proximal end including a bending section extending distally from the proximal end toward but not to the distal end, the bending section comprising one or more spiral cuts in the catheter shaft, the bending section having a flexibility greater than the flexibility of the portion of the catheter shaft adjacent the bending section;

a balloon secured to the distal end, the flexibility of the catheter shaft adjacent the balloon being lesser than the flexibility of the catheter shaft at the bending section;

a fitting secured to the proximal end of the catheter shaft, the fitting including a passageway in fluid communication with the catheter shaft; and

a fluid impermeable covering extending from the bending section toward but not to the distal end of the catheter shaft to seal the bending section.

27. **(Previously Presented)** The catheter of claim 26, wherein the fitting is a luer fitting.

28. **(Canceled).**

29. **(Previously Presented)** The catheter of claim 26, wherein the spiral cut is formed with a selectable number of spiral sections.

30. **(Previously Presented)** The catheter of claim 26, wherein the fluid impermeable covering is shaped as a sleeve or a tube.

31. **(Previously Presented)** The catheter of claim 26, wherein the fluid impermeable covering is adhesively bonded to the bending section.

32. **(Previously Presented)** The catheter of claim 26, wherein the fitting comprises a transition member connected to the proximal end, and wherein the transition member is structured to prevent unintended kinking of at least a portion of the bending section.

33. – 34. **(Canceled).**

35. **(Currently Amended)** A catheter comprising:  
a fitting including a passageway;  
a catheter shaft including a distal end and a proximal end, the proximal end being coupled to the fitting, which is in fluid communication with the catheter shaft, the proximal end including a bending section extending distally from the proximal end toward but not to the distal end, the bending section comprising one or more cuts in the catheter shaft, the bending section having a flexibility greater than the flexibility of ~~an adjacent portion of the~~ remainder of the catheter shaft;  
~~and~~  
a fluid impermeable covering extending from the bending section toward but not to the distal end of the catheter shaft to seal the one or more cuts of the bending section, a proximal portion of the fluid impermeable covering located within the passageway of the fitting; and  
a balloon secured to the distal end of the catheter shaft, the flexibility of the catheter shaft adjacent the balloon being lesser than the flexibility of the catheter shaft at the bending section.

36. **(Previously Presented)** The catheter of claim 35, wherein the one or more cuts are spiral cuts.

37. **(Previously Presented)** The catheter of claim 35, wherein the fitting comprises a transition member coupled to the catheter shaft the transition member extending over the proximal end of the catheter shaft and a proximal portion of the bending section.

38. **(Canceled).**

39. **(Currently Amended)** The catheter of claim 36, wherein the cuts increase in pitch towards the distal end.

40. **(Previously Presented)** The catheter of claim 35, wherein the fitting is a luer fitting.

41. **(Currently Amended)** A catheter comprising:  
a catheter shaft having a distal end, a proximal end, and a first outer cross-sectional diameter, the proximal end including a bending section, the bending section extending distally from the proximal end toward but not to the distal end, the bending section comprising one or more cuts in the catheter shaft, the bending section having a flexibility greater than the flexibility of the portion of the catheter shaft adjacent the bending section;

a balloon secured to the distal end, the flexibility of the catheter shaft adjacent the balloon being lesser than the flexibility of the catheter shaft at the bending section;

a fitting secured to the proximal end of the catheter shaft and having a second inner cross-sectional diameter greater than the first outer cross-sectional diameter; and

a fluid impermeable covering extending from the bending section toward but not to the distal end of the catheter shaft to seal the bending section---.

42. **(Previously Presented)** The catheter of claim 41, wherein the one or more cuts are spiral cuts.

43. **(Previously Presented)** The catheter of claim 41, wherein the fitting comprises a transition member coupled to the catheter shaft.

44. **(Previously Presented)** The catheter of claim 43, wherein the transition member extends over the proximal end of the catheter shaft, a proximal portion of the bending section, and a proximal portion of the fluid impermeable covering.

45. **(Previously Presented)** The catheter of claim 41, further comprising an inflation device coupled to the fitting for expanding the balloon.

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46.     **(Previously Presented)**     The catheter of claim 41, wherein the fitting is a luer fitting.